

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 20-26 and 28-37 are now in the case. Claim 20 has been amended to recite the inorganic flocculating agents disclosed in PCT/US00/08517 at page 9, line 20. Claim 21 has been amended to recite the term "agent", as suggested by the Examiner. Claim 33 has been amended to remove the "preferably" recitation, as a matter of form. The amendments add no new matter, and entry is requested.

Rejections Under 35 USC 112

Claim 21 has been rejected for reasons of record at page 2 of the Office Action. As noted above, Claim 21 has been amended in the manner indicated by the Examiner. Withdrawal of the rejection is requested. There are no other formal matters at issue.

Rejections Under 35 USC 102

Claims 20-22, 24-33, 35 and 37 stand rejected over EP 299,575 A1, for reasons of record at page 2 of the Office Action.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections on this basis, to the extent they may apply to the claims as now amended.

The '575 document relates to various organic flocculating agents (Page 2, l. 28-30; Page 3, l. 13-24; Claim 3). Nothing therein would appear to teach the inorganic flocculating agents now recited in the claims. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections on this basis are respectfully requested.

Rejections Under 35 USC 103

Claims 20-37 stand rejected over EP 299,575 A1, for reasons of record at pages 3-5 of the Office Action.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections on this basis, to the extent they may apply to the claims as now amended.


As noted above, the '575 document appears to relate entirely to organic flocculating agents. Nothing therein would appear to suggest the substitution of the presently-claimed inorganic flocculating agents for the organic flocculating agents listed at Pages 2, 3 and Claim 3 of '575. Absent some suggestion or motivation to make such a substitution, it is submitted that the amended claims now at issue are not obvious in the sense of §103. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections on this basis are requested.

Submission of Supplemental IDS/Form PTO-SB08

For the information of the Examiner, companion application P&G Case CM2081, Application No. 09/936,402, filed 9/11/01, has been assigned to Examiner Boyer. Examiner Boyer has rejected various claims (as earlier presented) over: EP 387,426; U.S. 5,759,982, EP 710,713; and U.S. 5,668,073. It is noted that none of these documents was made of record in the instant application by the IDS, filed 10/31/01. Enclosed herewith is a supplemental IDS and copies of the above patents for consideration by the Examiner in the present application, as may be appropriate. It is requested that these documents be formally made of record in the case.

In light of the above amendments and remarks, it is requested that the Examiner withdraw all rejections under 35 USC §§§ 102, 103 and 112.. Early and favorable action in the case is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
Hall et al.

By 
Jerry J. Yetter
Attorney for Applicant(s)
Registration No. 26,598
(513) 627-1907

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Customer No. 27752